

## DRAFT Staff Summary

### Early Learning Council Meeting April 18, 2006

#### WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND UPDATES

Bob Watt opened the meeting by welcoming Early Learning Council (ELC) members and others in attendance. Updates included:

- **Private-Public Partnership.** Regina Jones and Greg Shaw updated the group on the private-public partnership. The governance discussion continues with bylaws and articles of incorporation being developed, negotiations are underway about use of “Thrive by Five,” and progress being made toward selecting a search firm to help with hiring an executive director. Greg indicated that the partnership is getting close to having a budget—which according to the Memorandum of Understanding is to be completed within the first 120 days.
- **Study of Access to High Quality Early Learning Services.** Bob Watt commended the group for its hard work during the March ELC meeting on policy specifications required for the University of Washington (UW) team to move forward on modeling. As recommended in March, a Steering Committee has been formed to bring issues back to the ELC in a timely, bite-sized manner. The Steering Committee includes the funding partners and people with specific expertise in early learning finance: Sally Pritchard, Billie Young, Rep. Ruth Kagi, Regina Jones, Maria Vera, Susan Yang, Greg Shaw, Saroja Reddy, Joyce Walters, Terry Meersman, Heather Moss, Kathy Thamm, and Rick Brandon.
- **Regulatory TAC.** Charley Bingham and Nancy Gerber reported on the work of the Regulatory TAC. The group is investigating what research says about effective regulation and is seeking input from parents and providers. A primary product will be the formulation of principles to guide regulations and the regulatory process.
- **QRIS TAC.** Bridgett Chandler reported on the ongoing efforts of this TAC, which has formed small groups to look at QRIS implementation. Small groups are focusing on: 1) provider outreach and input; 2) infrastructure (administration, monitoring and evaluation); 3) compensation, incentives and tiered reimbursement; and 4) supports to professional development and quality.
- **Early Learning/K-12 Joint Work Group.** Elaine Von Rosenstiel reported that this group is drafting a vision statement and major policy recommendations in support of “children ready for schools and schools ready for children.”
- **Department of Early Learning Transition.** Heather Moss provided a brief overview of transition activities including development of an organizational chart (necessary to establish account codes, etc.); search for a facility so that ECEAP and DCCEL staff in Olympia can be in a common location; and search for the new director (Ted Ford Webb has been engaged to conduct the search). On April 24<sup>th</sup>,

workgroups will forward their recommendations to the Transition Executive Committee.

- **NGA Early Learning Summit Grant.** Washington State received a \$10,000 NGA grant to conduct a summit on early learning. Heather reported that the summit will be held in conjunction with the larger Washington Learns summit in November. The plan is to support community teams in developing action plans for early learning. Following the summit, groups would be linked together through a listserv and other means to disseminate information about best practices. A summit advisory committee is being formed—Blanca Fernandez and Bridgett Chandler agreed to represent the ELC on this group. Heather indicated that \$10,000 is unlikely to cover the full costs of the summit. Bob Watt suggested that the committee be formed and that a budget be drafted for further consideration by the ELC. Kip Tokuda stressed the need to make special efforts to include diverse populations.
- **Benchmarks Redesign Group.** Regina Jones indicated that we are close to finalizing a small leadership team and larger advisory group to the redesign effort. She also reminded the ELC about the Undoing Institutional Racism training to be May 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.
- **Spokane Early Learning Awareness and Mobilization.** Cliff Lawrence talked about an event in Spokane on April 14<sup>th</sup> to raise awareness and mobilize the community including business leaders around early learning.

## FOCUS GROUPS ON EARLY LEARNING

Greg Shaw introduced Robert Moore (Moore Information) and Jason Ralston (GMMB Creative) who were funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to conduct eight focus groups in February. The sessions were held in Kirkland, Seattle, Pasco and Spokane and included opinion leaders and low and middle-income parents. In brief, focus group participants indicated wide awareness about the importance of the early years and agreement that preparing a child for kindergarten (especially social skills) is one of a parent's most important responsibilities. Access to good quality care was a leading concern, and affordability is a barrier to child care and preschool availability. While there was hesitancy about the role of government in providing early learning services, statistics such as “fewer than 50% of children are ready for kindergarten” heightened the sense of urgency on the part of participants. (Presentation available on the Early Learning Council website under April 18 meeting materials.)

## Supports for Parents with Young Children (Panel and Discussion)

Karen Tvedt introduced a panel of experts who presented various approaches to conceptualizing supports for parents and families. **Steve Aos**, Associate Director, Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) provided an overview of a study done by the WSIPP on the “Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention Programs for Youth.” **Joan Sharp**, Executive Director, Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, described a social-ecological model that focuses

on where change happens. **Jill Sells**, Pediatrician and Consultant on Health and Children's Issues, highlighted parenting information and support using the Kids Matters Framework. **Greg Shaw** and **Sherry Wong** (Talaris Research Institute) walked the group through a draft conceptual framework for thinking about a range of parenting support options that vary by approach and intensity. (Materials from these presentations are also available on the ELC website under April 18 meeting materials.)

## **Correspondence and Public Comment**

- Sue Winn, family child care provider, asked why the studies noted in the WSIPP study focused on three and four year olds. Steve noted that this is the group that has been studied most.
- Wendy Roedel, Puget Sound ESD, pointed out that in programs such as ECEAP and Head Start, early learning and parent support are closely linked.
- Shari Hill, U of W, noted that lack of funding for evaluation means that many effective programs didn't meet the WSIPP criteria. She argued for increased attention to infants and toddlers.
- Laura Hitchcock, United Way of King County, recommended that the ELC convene a work group to examine where the state should be investing funds in parenting support.
- Theresa Gemer, librarian, talked about the importance of libraries in supporting early learning. Libraries need to be viewed as an important community resource for early learning.
- Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society, seconded the need for a work group on parenting support. (Kip Tokuda also supported this recommendation.)

Bob Watt noted the urgency people feel around supporting parents and suggested that this is a place where the private sector may be able to help.

Bob also noted that the ELC received an email and proposal from Abe Bergman urging prioritization of foster children for enrollment in early learning programs.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:15 pm.